

Runaway June

By George Randolph Chester and Lillian Chester

By special arrangement for this paper a photo-drama corresponding to the installments of "Runaway June" may now be seen at the leading moving picture theaters. By arrangement made with the Mutual Film Corporation it is not only possible to read "Runaway June" each week, but also afterward to see moving pictures illustrating our story.

Copyright, 1915, by Serial Publication Corporation.

SYNOPSIS.

June, the bride of Ned Warner, impulsively leaves her husband on their honeymoon because she begins to realize that she must be entirely dependent on him for money. She desires to be independent. June is pursued by Gilbert Blye, a wealthy married man. She escapes from his clutches with difficulty. Ned searches distractedly for June, and, learning of Blye's designs, vows vengeance on him. After many adventures June is rescued from river pirates by Durban, an artist. She poses as "The Spirit of the Marsh," is driven out by Mrs. Durban and is kidnapped by Blye and Cunningham.

THIRTEENTH EPISODE.

Trapped.

CHAPTER I.

DRAPED as the Spirit of the Marsh, the beautiful little runaway bride stood, dazed and trembling, on the sidewalk in front of the studio from which she had been driven. At the curb stood a limousine with its black silk curtains drawn. The white mustached man, who had sprung from it, grasped the lovely model by the wrist and drew her to the car as the dark, handsome, black Vandyked man who had followed covered her gaudily clad form with the voluminous black cloak which he carried.

Down the street at a tearing pace came the family car of the runaway bride's father and mother, and in it with them were two of her friends and the deserted groom, his teeth gritting and his fists clinched as he saw these two scoundrels bundle his pretty June into the car and hurry in after her.

Just behind the family came an electric coupe, driven by a sharp featured woman with a long nose and high arched brows, and as she saw this bold abduction she shrieked and ran her car into the curb. As the door of the limousine slammed shut the quiet block seemed suddenly alive. Around the corner of the studio came bounding a handsome collier, which ran to the car, loudly barking. A woman with high cheek bones and accompanied by a tall policeman followed the dog. She dashed up to the limousine as it started and jumped upon the running board, while the dog barked and leaped.

From a doorway on the opposite side of the street there sprang a short, wide man with a thick stub of a cigar in his mouth, who pursued the limousine, hopped upon the spare tires at the back of the car and hung there. The woman on the running board opened the door of the limousine and forced her way in as they dashed around the corner, furiously pursued by the family car, the electric coupe and the barking collier.

The limousine was swifter than its pursuers, but not speedy enough entirely to lose the family car with the deserted groom. It had gained several blocks' headway, however, when it turned a corner and stopped abruptly in front of a house where a vivacious brunette and a large blond woman stood peering eagerly out of the window. Only for an instant it paused. The door opened. Out it sprang the white mustached man and drew after him the faint haired girl in the voluminous black cloak. He put his arm around her and hurriedly forced her up the steps. The woman with the high cheek bones darted after her. She hesitated a moment and vaguely recognized the cloak; then she sprang after the beautiful young girl.

The man with the black Vandyke caught her by the arm and held her back. He spoke sharply to the driver, and the limousine jerked forward just as the door of the house opened and the beautiful girl was thrust inside.

The thick, wide man on behind struggled to get down from his uncomfortable position, but his cravat was caught in the strap of the tire covers, and so the well known and justly famous private detective, Bill Wolf, stooped over the tires, with his wide feet in the rack and his arms around the rims and his head held down, was carried swiftly away from the scene of his sleuthing. The black Vandyked man talked earnestly with the high cheek boned woman for an instant and gave her some money, hurried up the steps and let himself in with a latch-key, while the woman ran down to the basement door and pushed past the servant who opened it.

At that moment the family car swerved around the corner and flashed by, still pursuing the luxurious limousine. It had lost this scene of alighting through having stopped long enough to take on the handsome collier, which now sat on the front seat with the driver. There was no mistaking that luxurious limousine, with its black curtains tightly drawn and a bit of filmy gauze fluttering from the door and the faithful Bill Wolf still stooped on behind.

So it was that beautiful June Warner came into the boarding house of Mrs. Russell. In the parlor to which she was abruptly introduced there were three young women and a young man. With a swift motion the white mustached man drew from June's shoulders the voluminous black cloak.

"The Spirit of the Marsh!" he laughed by way of introduction, and the shrinking June clutched her draperies convulsively about her as she met the frankly admiring gaze of the young man and the critical inspection of the young women.

The voluminous black cloak was suddenly jerked from the hands of the white mustached man, and the man with the black Vandyke stood there with a scowl on his dark, handsome face. Swiftly he wrapped the cloak around the shrinking form of the young girl and drew her out of the room.

"Marie! Marie!" cried June, and she ran toward the woman with the high cheek bones, who stood at the head of the stairs.

"Bring her in here," Blye said in his low, pleasantly modulated voice, and, opening the door of a sumptuously furnished chamber, he stood by it.

Just then there came springing up the stairs the white mustached man. June darted into the room, but the black Vandyked man detained Marie and talked earnestly with the maid. At first she kept

shaking her head. He showed her some money, and she still shook her head. He gave her some more, and she smiled and went downstairs.

"June!" It was the voice of Cunningham. She sprang to her feet as the door suddenly opened and Cunningham came into the room.

CHAPTER II.

FAR out on Broadway the luxurious limousine, with the black curtains drawn and the bit of filmy gauze fluttering from the door, turned toward the river, with the faithful Bill Wolf still stooped over the tires, his cravat still firmly clutched in the strap of the tire cover and his empurpled face turned partly up, so that the corner of one pink eye could gaze back imploringly at the pursuing car.

In that car, strained tensely forward, Ned Warner sat with gritted teeth and clinched hands, never removing his eyes from the fleeing limousine into which he had seen his lovely runaway bride bundled by the scoundrelly Gilbert Blye. Again he urged the driver Jerry to greater speed. He was determined that this time the chase should not end until he had his fingers clutched around the throat of the dark, handsome man with the black Vandyke and had strangled him to death. He had wrecked Ned's life, this dastardly Blye, and nothing but a life would pay. On the very day of Ned's marriage the fellow's evil machinations had begun.

The black curtained limousine just ahead wheeled around the corner and dashed up the hill at high speed, with the faithful Bill Wolf wobbling on behind like a Japanese balloon.

The girl in the sumptuously furnished room at Mrs. Russell's shrieked the name of Gilbert Blye, and he came hurrying into the room, a scowl upon his dark, handsome face. Gilbert Blye pointed sternly to the door, and Cunningham, after a moment of sullen hesitation, left the room, twirling his white mustache. At the door he turned and cast upon June a malevolent glare.

"Please! Please, Mr. Blye!" begged June. "Come!" His low voice soothed her. "You must rest for a few moments, and I promise that no one shall disturb you. I shall return in ten minutes."

In the basement Marie stood with Gilbert Blye's money in her hand. She started for the door. She came back and started for the stairs. She turned again to the door, again to the stairs, then stood and looked at Gilbert Blye's money, her high cheek bones white and indecision on her brow.

Uphill and downhill rushed the black curtained limousine with the Moore family car still in hot pursuit.

Occasionally the well known and justly famous private detective, Bill Wolf, loosened his clutch for an instant, but tightened it immediately.

The sharp featured woman with the long nose and the high arched brows rolled her electric coupe up to the door of her own house and went into the parlor.

June walked slowly to a wardrobe and opened it. Half a dozen gaudy costumes hung there. She chose one of the most attractive. She donned this garment, congratulating herself that it fitted her. She added a headpiece of beads found lying on a bureau.

As Gilbert Blye started up the stairs he stopped, surprised by the beautiful figure which emerged from the sumptuously furnished chamber, and came down toward him with queenly grace. It was June, an entrancing vision of loveliness in her borrowed finery, and in her eyes was a new light.

"Will you give me a cigarette, please?" she gayly requested him, and he looked at her in astonishment.

"Why—why, yes!" he stammered. He produced his case, and she took a cigarette. Still studying her curiously, he lit his pocket lighter for her, and a slight frown twitched upon his brow as, puckering her beautiful red lips, she blew a long thin stream of blue smoke into his face.

"Come on," she called, and, taking his arm, she tripped smilingly into the parlor, with a sidelong glance, however, as she left the hall at the stalwart attendant who guarded the front door.

"Whose dress am I wearing?" she cheerfully demanded as she seated herself.

"It's mine," said one of the girls, jumping up from the side of Cunningham and walking all around her. "But, honey, I'm bound to say that it looks better on you than it does on me." And there was a trace of envy in the compliment.

"By George, you're a stunner!" said Orin Cunningham, who had been too much astonished to rise until now, and, with a sidelong glance at Gilbert Blye, he walked across to her, and from his pocket he drew a long white leather case closed with a golden clasp. He opened it, drew something from it and, his eyes sparkling, held up a string of milk white pearls.

She flashed her large, lustrous eyes at him, and her rosy lips parted in a smile; then she looked at Gilbert Blye. He hesitated a moment and nodded. Then she bent her head, and Cunningham threw the string of pearls around her beautiful white neck.

She put her arm through his and merrily danced across the room to a mirror, where, with sparkling eyes, she admired the pretty bauble.

"I think I'll have a cocktail, please," she said, turning suddenly to Mrs. Russell.

"Bless your heart, honey," laughed Mrs. Russell. "I didn't suppose you knew how to drink a cocktail."

June was a bubble, a sprite, a dancing effervescent, a gay little tantalization, until Mrs. Russell returned with cocktails for all of them. June drank hers with enchanting abandon.

Suddenly she whirled to the door, and Cunningham followed.

"No, no!" she laughingly cried. "I'm going to surprise you. You must stay in here and wait."

"Not me," laughed Cunningham. "Then I won't surprise you." And she snounced into a chair with a pretty pout.

"Here, Cunningham," called the young man, who had followed June, "we want that surprise!"

"Sit down, Cunningham," said Blye, and he indicated where Cunningham was to sit while he held back the portieres for June to pass.

She stopped in the curtains.

"Now, mind, none of you is to come! And have another cocktail ready for me!" She whispered something in Blye's ear as she hurried into the hall, and he threw a kiss at her.

He put his head out, however, and looked at the liveried attendant. That stalwart person stood stiffly at the door and cast his gloomy eyes on June.

Halfway up the stairs June turned and found the eyes of the stalwart guard fixed steadfastly upon her. She smiled sweetly at him and beckoned. He hesitated a moment, then came stalking slowly to her. So long as she was within reach of him he need not be within reach of the door.

"What's your name?" and, folding her hands together, she beamed down at the big lout.

"Christian," and he actually grinned.

"Well, Christian, now listen," and she held up a warning finger. "I want you to help me play a little trick. Come on and I'll show you." She turned and tripped lightly up the stairs.

Christian, however, turned and stalked to the parlor and poked his yellow head between the portieres.

"She wants me to help play a trick," he announced, and they all laughed.

"It's a safe trick if you help," chuckled Cunningham, and Blye motioned his assent. Thereupon Christian stalked up the stairs and entered the room where June stood anxiously awaiting him.

Her silvery little laugh came as she saw him, and she ran lightly to the window and threw it open. There was a tiny balcony outside which was entirely isolated and quite high above the street.

"Now, just stand out there," she directed, and he stepped obediently out.

Gently she lowered the window.

"I'll tell you what to do next," she laughed and, nodding to him, turned the window lock; then she

family car looked at each other in perplexity as Jerry curved round back to the road. How peculiar! The black curtained limousine was apparently heading into the city again, and a curved limousine came into the broad back of faithful Bill Wolf.

In the decorated parlor Mrs. Russell served the cocktails and started upstairs with June's. They stopped her at the portieres.

"She's not to be disturbed," they all told her in their different forms of speech.

June Warner had fled far away from that section, hurrying on and on as if she could not put enough distance between herself and that hateful scene. She was in the more densely populated district now, on a street of cheap shops and rickety tenements, and the fourth or fifth pawnshop which she passed gave her a happy idea. She looked in at the next one. It was repulsive looking. She remembered a cleaner one which she had passed and went back to it. She hesitated a moment, then went boldly in.

There she found a pudgy, bowlegged little man. "Is it anything I can do, miss?" he asked her.

"How much will you give me for this, please?" and from her hair she took an exquisitely carved tortoise shell comb studded with blue stones.

The pudgy little man glanced at it indifferently. "Half a dollar, maybe."

"Oh!" And June picked up the comb in dismay. "Why, these are real sapphires. The comb cost"—

"Excuse me." The pudgy little man grabbed the comb from her hand and trotted nimbly to the

climbed the stairs, stopping at the first landing for a recurrence of that slight cough which had come upon her.

An impossibly dirty man stood behind a long table, on which were piled huge bundles tied in rough paper.

"Well?" he said gruffly.

"I would like to sew some pants, if you please," said June modestly.

The man shrugged his shoulders.

"You go over to that woman there, and she'll show you what's to be done and how much deposit to pay." He indicated another table.

When June went down the narrow stairs she carried as heavy a bundle as she could conveniently lift, and her scanty store of money was reduced to a very small margin. Little as it was, however, she had yet to make a purchase. In the first little store she bought an inexpensive little plain black dress. She had less than a dollar when she stopped before a building to which she had been directed by the shopkeeper. Its lower floor had once been occupied as a bank, but it had been tenanted for years. On the doorstep of the stairway was a sign, "Rooms to Let."

June here engaged a mean little hall bedroom from a dumpy landlady.

Down Broadway tore the black curtained limousine, the observed of all observers, for still attached to its cravat and clamped to the tires so stiffly that he felt he would have to be pried off was the well known and justly famous private detective, Bill Wolf, faithful in spite of himself. Not more than two blocks behind came the family car, with June's handsome collier on the seat beside Jerry, June's father sterner, and June's mother gentler and more quiet, Bobby Blethering in patient wonder at the restlessness of the world, June's bosom friend, Iris Blethering, quivering with excitement and emotion, and the deserted groom gritting his teeth and clinching his fists as the black curtained limousine, with its bit of filmy gauze fluttering at the door, constantly kept just before them like a tantalizing will o' the wisp.

In the gaudily furnished house of Mrs. Russell there was a frantic running to and fro and up and down stairs. Every room in the house was searched, and at last Orin Cunningham thought to investigate why one of the windows in the room which had been provided for June seemed darker behind its heavy hangings than the others. He found the fire shutters closed and opened them, revealing the stalwart Christian frozenly waiting on the isolated balcony to be told his further share in June's trick. The young man and the three girls laughed.

June was gone, and Gilbert Blye turned and walked down the stairs.

He paced the hall for a few moments, his head bent, his black eyes somber and his long, lean white fingers stroking his black Vandyke.

There was a ring at the doorbell. A messenger boy, and he carried a bundle. A stealthy figure slipped forward into the hall.

"No answer," said the boy as he delivered the bundle.

Orin Cunningham at a signal from Blye took the bundle and passed it to Mrs. Russell. She tore it open and drew forth before the revelers who had gathered in her parlor the gorgeous raiment in which they had last seen the beautiful June. Orin Cunningham stooped down with an oath and picked up something which had fallen to the floor. The string of pearls! He stamped upon the floor in rage.

"Stop that messenger boy!" came the cold, hard tones of Gilbert Blye, and the stalwart Christian, rushing out, brought back the boy.

"Where did you get this bundle?" demanded Orin Cunningham.

The boy hitched his trousers.

"I ain't supposed to tell."

"How much did you get for not telling?" demanded Mrs. Russell.

"All she had—70 cents."

"Here's \$2," said Orin. "Now, where did you get this bundle?"

The boy grinned.

"Tellin's always worth more than not tellin'," he sagely observed and jerked his call slip from his pocket. "There's the address."

Gilbert Blye, casting a glance at the slip, opened the door and strode out on the steps. The stealthy figure which had crept along the hall suddenly darted out of the door after the messenger boy and hurried up the street with him. It was Marie.

Down the street there whizzed the black curtained limousine. Blye hurried out to it as it stopped and, with blazing impatience, called, "Come on!"

Cunningham dashed from the house and jumped into the limousine, while Blye gave swift directions to his driver. He, too, hopped in and shut the door and threw up the side curtains, revealing the car empty except for himself and Cunningham. The women in the door called something in shrill excitement as the car rushed away, but Scatt paid no attention, and the well known and justly famous private detective, Bill Wolf, groaned.

Around the corner dashed the family car of the Moores, with Ned Warner.

The dumpy landlady knocked at the door of June's little bedroom and stopped in profound astonishment when she entered. At the rickety table sat her new lodger in a plain, cheap black dress, bent earnestly forward. She was sewing pants!

"Why, I hardly knew you," said the landlady, looking around the room. She waddled to the door of the filmy wardrobe and peered in. It was empty.

"Where's them fine clothes you had?"

"They did not belong to me," June said simply. "I sent them away after buying this dress."

"Oh, you did! What about the necklace?"

"That was a gift which I could not accept," and June's eyes dropped. "I sent it away also."

All the puckers in the fat landlady's brow deepened and knotted.

"Oh, you did!" She cleared her throat and looked at the stack of pants and at the delicate fingers which were laboriously pushing the needle through the coarse cloth. "By the way, I forgot to get any rent from you. I always get a week in advance."

June smiled wanly and shook her head. "I am sorry," she said. "I have no money."

"What!" The dumpy landlady jumped to her feet. She was breathing so hard that she wheezed. "No money! Young lady, you'll have to get out!"

"Oh, no!" pleaded June. "Please!"

She turned for one last word of appeal, but the landlady's pitiless arm was outstretched.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



slid the steel fire shutters, which she had discovered in the window jamb, and dropped their bolt in place.

On the bed were the coat and hat which she had laid out. She grabbed these up and then, with a quick glance about her, closed her door softly from the outside and tiptoed down the stairs. She scarcely breathed as she slipped past the parlor portieres and covered the slight cough which she could not repress. Her touch upon the locks of the heavy front door was as deft and as light as a feather.

As the big door swung slowly June stifled a shriek with the sharp intake of her breath. The portieres had swayed, and an elbow had come through!

Quick as a flash June slipped out through the narrow crack which would accommodate her body. Closing the door behind her with a touch as soft as the breath of summer, June hurried lightly down the steps, crouching close to the stone wall.

CHAPTER III.

THE black curtained limousine, its bit of filmy gauze fluttering at the door and Bill Wolf holding on to the spare tires for dear life, swept from the road down into the long private drive to a beautiful residence overlooking the river, and Bill Wolf, with a long sigh of relief, prepared to unbend at last from his stiffening position. The car, however, never slackened.

As it dashed past the porte-cochere its wide faced Italian driver bent and looked at his clock and swept around on the other side of the long curve just as the family car of the Moores whirled into the drive. The handsome collier yelped as he recognized the familiar spot, and the five people in the

window, screwing a jeweler's glass in his bulging eye as he went. "Oh, \$8, maybe!"

"Why, the comb cost—"

"Sorry, lady," and rubbing his pudgy hands together, he smiled ingratiatingly at her, "but by the time you dig them little stones and sell them you waste so much labor that if I'd give you \$8.25 I'd lose money, maybe."

June slowly picked up the comb. She was outside the door before he called her back.

"Wait!" He smiled ingratiatingly at her. "You need the money, lady?"

"Very much, I fear," she confessed.

"And would you give me your promise that you take up the loan some time, with the interest?"

"Oh, yes!" This very eagerly. "The comb is a keepsake."

"Then I give you \$8.50."

She gathered up the money with a sickening sense of humiliation and took the ticket he gave her and walked out, feeling that she had been badly worsted, because she had no heart for this sort of bartering. It dawned upon her that there were worse humiliations than accepting money from one's husband, and yet— She conquered the weakness which sprang fiercely up in her, which made her heart cry in anguish for Ned, which made her long to desert all this hideous struggle and fly to his sheltering arms. No; she must fight to the end!

But what was she to do next? A sign at the foot of a dark, narrow stairway caught her eye—

"Girls Wanted to Sew Pants."

Labor, honest toil. Slight as might be the pay, was it not better, after all, than the occupations in which she had suffered so much? Timorously June

